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Luxury condo renovation for the Fall Home & Garden Issue.
Photo courtesy of Vujovich Design Build



Photo Mike Hnida

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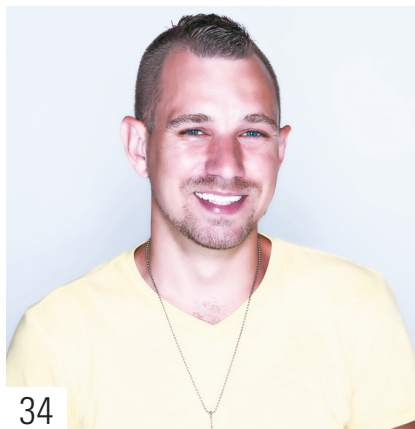


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CORRECTION

Duluth's new GLBT nightclub, the Flame Nightclub (above, co-owner Alvin Berg), was erroneously listed as being in Canal Park in Issue 450. It is located at 26 N. First Ave. W in Downtown Duluth. www.duluthflame.com.
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I'm sitting at my desk just hours before leaving for my first vacation since taking this job over a year ago. I'm pretty much crawling out of my skin, in a good way. I also feel a little bit sassier—fortified—in my new orange VOTE NO t-shirt. In my size. I know. They didn't apparently exist, but now they do. I'm stoked.

My destination is Seattle, Washington, for a bit... and then I'll go up (north) to check out Vancouver and Whistler in Canada. Knowing that these are extremely GLBT-friendly places to go, believe me: this isn't the last you've heard of my trip. Like any writer/photographer/editor worth her salt, I'll make sure the whole thing will be documented for you.

What I'm curious about is what kind of reaction my VOTE NO shirt will get as I travel. I'm big, it's orange; together, we'll be a visual force to reckon with. I anticipate conversations, particularly at the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport today. But, I also anticipate friendliness, particularly in Washington, where marriage equality is also at the fore, as well as Gay Whistler, where same-sex marriage is celebrated.

It won't always be comfortable. For one thing, I don't wear bright colors. Those of you who encounter me in the wild know that it's rare to see me in anything other than black, though I do make an attempt to be more chromatic at our events than I do on any other day. This bright orange shirt visually propels me into your eyeballs. Then, VOTE NO. It's in your face but not demanding that your attention stay with it. Glance at me, look away. Go ahead. The impression has still been made...and, with it, will be a smile.

I'm friendly. My message is one about love. It's a little touchy-feely when you think about it: make love, not war. I come in peace and I hope to be received in peace as well.

Similarly, this approach can be applied to a little problem we're having in this campaign. Have you noticed how many of us are preaching to the choir? Multiple people have mentioned this to me, how even Lavender is speaking to a mostly friendly audience...so how do we expand the campaign? Of course everyone thumbs-ups our VOTE NO posts on Facebook—if our circles are only the like-minded folks, it makes sense. How can we move past the choir to include more people?

A bright orange shirt and a smile both help.

What could be the equivalent in effect, but without the change of wardrobe or head-turning color?

I have a possible solution.

You know how many of us are just SO DONE and OVER the people from home? You know, the people we never have to deal with again unless we go home to high school reunions or run into

them at the grocery store. The people that we are even a little proud about being beyond...or for having left them behind. Some of them aren't proven to be intolerant, but they're in that halo effect of a more narrow-minded childhood. A painful young-adulthood. A harrowing college experience before coming out. Heck, a weird comment string on a shared friend's Facebook post. All of these are places that might leave us with a bad taste in our mouths in terms of dealing with people. We write them off simply due to guilt by association.

I've noticed that there are the intolerant people and that there are the people who are still considering. They're very quiet people; they don't comment or express "Like" over things, but they're watching. They won't wear an orange t-shirt. They're the people who won't stand on a soapbox, but will still be voting in November.

And they might VOTE NO.

Who are they? I have my suspicions. Think back to the people who were more neutral in your past. The ones who you have had some sort of relationship with but wouldn't call them close—the ones who you've encountered. You could encounter them again...like on Facebook. You could "friend" them. You could have just as neutral of a relationship with them as you did the first go-round, but, this time, you're different. You're open about your life and your goals. You show them, kind of like wearing a t-shirt or putting up a lawn sign or posting a video on your own Facebook page, that you're a person who they (still and now) know, who is negatively effected by this proposed amendment. That you, by existing in their repertoire of people, deserve consideration.

Antagonism isn't necessarily the way to go with these new-old friends. Living and teaching by example is a less heavy-handed way of dealing with the issue of equal rights. We've been talking about how telling our stories will make the difference in fighting this amendment—your Facebook page is telling your story. And people are watching and taking notes. Thankfully.

I've mentioned before how I'm from Cokato, a conservative community that's west of the Twin Cities by about an hour. I know there are people there who I've left geographically, but who I am happy to never say I've "left behind." They're people who I can draw into the conversation simply by not letting up on this issue of VOTING NO. They are people who I might not even know are part of the choir I'm preaching to.

Invite people into your choirs. Preach by living your life. Expand your circle of influence in a gentle way. Or, heck, get your own blaze-orange VOTE NO t-shirt.

Whatever you do, don't mistake all the thumbs-ups on VOTE NO posts as indicating a victory. See them for what they are: encouragement.

With you...and with thanks,

Andy ■



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I've written about the far right's increasing misogyny before: "Is It something in the Water?" (440) and "Cherchez la Femme?" (443).

In the first, Chuck Winder, (R-Boise) defended his bill requiring pre-abortion ultrasounds saying, "Rape and incest was used as a reason to oppose this [bill]. I would hope that when a woman goes in to a physician with a rape issue, that physician will indeed ask her about perhaps her marriage, was this pregnancy caused by normal relations in a marriage or was it truly caused by a rape." In the second, Georgia State Representative Bobby Franklin had introduced a bill requiring proof that a woman's miscarriage or spontaneous abortion occurred naturally—without intervention. Lacking that proof, she could face felony charges.

More recently, Republican Congressman (MO) Todd Akin displayed his vast ignorance by prating that "legitimately" raped women "rarely" get pregnant. On the heels of the ensuing brouhaha, Sharon Barnes, high-ranking Missouri Republican, defended him, asserting he had "phrased it badly." She went on to append her own religious interpretation: "If God has chosen to bless this person [the rape vic-

tim] with a life, you don't kill it." (Consider the old Yiddish saying, "If I knew God, I'd *be* God.")

Ignorance and religion remain the preferred weapons against reason and personal choice. There is no way to change the Winders, Franklins, Akinses and Barneses. But their intransigent positions, their very existence as a force in our country, makes it imperative in these weeks before the November election to talk with the undecided and stress the importance on voting NO on both the marriage and the voter ID amendments.

Beyond voting NO on these two amendments to our state constitution, we need to consider the need to apply "no" even more broadly. Think carefully, and discuss with others, what saying "yes" to any given candidate may mean. Would that candidate use his/her religion to legislate *your* civil rights? The rights of others? Is he/she content to rest easy in their own "havenness" dismissing the "have-nots"? Is he/she thinking, "I, my daughter, my sister, won't be raped—forbid *all* abortions."?

Vote NO on the amendments and NO to anyone of any party who would demean women and curtail the civil rights of any citizen. □



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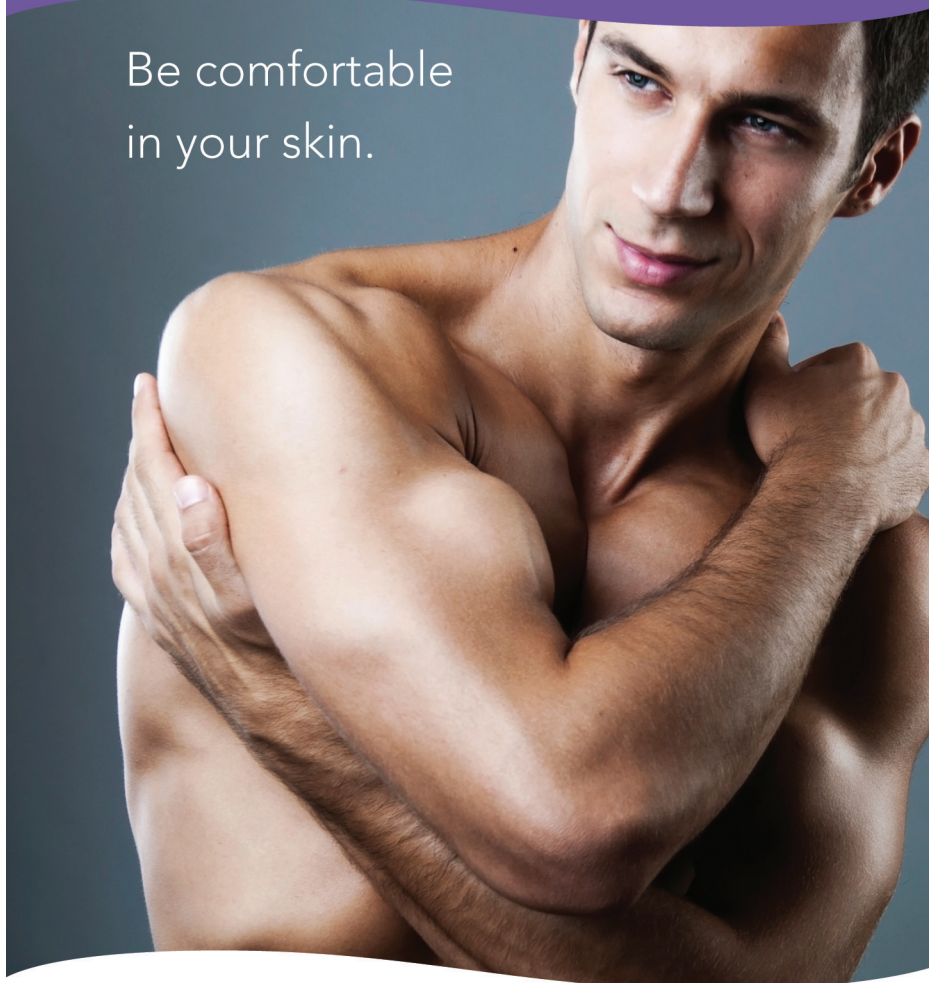
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The Brothers Size. Photo by Travis Anderson

THE BROTHERS SIZE

Through Sept. 29

Guthrie's Dowling Studio, 818 So. 2nd St., Mpls.

(612) 377-2224

www.guthrietheater.org

For those concerned about the focus of many members of the African-American community who do not support marriage equality, be aware that Tarell McCraney is a 30-ish gay African-American playwright who clearly lights the way to a brighter future. His acclaimed *The Brothers Size* has opened as a Pillsbury House/Mt. Curve Production at the Guthrie's Dowling Studio. And brother, does it crackle!

McCraney has written a sort of seemingly nonerotic love triangle between two brothers and a buddy that one brother's bonded with in prison. Auto mechanic Ogun (James Williams) habitually shames his younger brother, Oshoosi (Nimir Smallwood), about his checkered past. Oshoosi's prison friend, Elegba (Gavin Lawrence), tries to draw Oshoosi away from his brother's apron strings.

Marion McClinton's superb actor trio manifests the hardhittingly lyrical language as they match the emotions with deep feeling and sardonic wit. This is the second in McCraney's Brother/Sister



The Good Fight. Photo by George Grantham Bain Collection (Library of Congress)

Trilogy and frankly, it's far superior to the first installment, the over-rated *In the Red and Brown Water*, in which McCraney evoked images of women one would not expect from a thoughtful gay playwright. But with *The Brothers Size*, he knows what he's writing about, and he has written it beautifully. Also, you don't need to see the previous show to understand this one. *The Brothers Size* stands on its own.

Moreover, how refreshing to see a gay playwright reflect on men's issues and not just gay issues. Decades ago, many gay-identified writers and their readers/audiences got so caught up in identity politics of their own and their allies that they misplaced their capacity to understand men in general. Not the case with McCraney, and it's splendid to see that reclaimed.

Indeed, though there are a few moments that can be read as homoerotic in the play, it's not a "gay play." McClinton says it "speaks to all levels of love between black men and its possibilities. Also the fear that love creates when the fullness of those possibilities become known. These are men struggling to be in control of their own lives and trying to understand what that control means."

THE GOOD FIGHT

Sept. 29 – Oct. 4

Lowry Lab, 350 St. Peter St., St. Paul

(612) 721-1186

www.theatreunbound.com

Playwright Anne Bertram has a visceral sense of women's history, whether she's writing about axe-murderer Lizzie Borden or the background to the novel, *Frankenstein*. Her latest focuses on Grace Roe (played by Jennifer Kudelka), who Bertram relates "was the fourth in line for chief organizer of the Women's Social and Political Union, the militant suffrage organization in England. Grace ended up in charge after a police raid on the WSPU offices in 1913. I chose her story because she was the one who decided to create the bodyguard. Up to that point, WSPU had drawn a very clear line: they did violence against property, smashing windows and so on, but never against living creatures. 'Not a man, woman, child, cat or canary' as one of them said. They were the objects of much violence, from police beatings to force feeding in prison, and they used this to stoke public outrage, expecting that, with enough outrage, the public would force the government to give women the vote. Grace Roe decided to start resisting abuse—to protect the leaders from the police, even if this meant hurting other human beings. What drove her to that decision? And what were the consequences? That was the story I wanted to tell."

KILLER JOE – THE STAGE PLAY

Through Oct. 7

People's Center, 425-20th Av.

S., Mpls.

(612) 724-3760

www.candidtheaterco.com

Tracy Letts is best known now for his magnificent milestone stage comedy, *August: Osage County*. But in his first play, *Killer Joe*, we see the beginnings of the great and courageous playwright. Director Justin Kirkeberg calls it "a world view of fractured people, people with an intimate relationship with desperation and poverty who make decisions based on what is right in from of them with little attention to the consequences. The Smith family are all broken individuals and are the exception to the rule that the whole is better than the sum of its parts. The Smiths feed on each other's weaknesses, using



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Killer Joe-The Stage Play. Photo by Elle Zulauf

them to exploit each other and position themselves for a better outcome that never arrives. Then comes the gun for hire. His quiet calm seems to starkly contrast with the Smiths. But we find that his calm is a mask that covers an even darker core." Lijesh Krishnan plays Killer Joe Cooper.

LYSISTRATA

Through Sept. 30
Theatre in the Round Players, 245 Cedar Av., Mpls.
(612) 333-3010
www.theaterintheround.org

When it comes to comedy from ancient times, Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* is arguably the most popular and accessible for modern times. It tells the outlandish story of Athenian wives withholding sexual relations from their husbands until they stop fighting the Peloponnesian War. 2011's Theater Artist of the Year, Craig Johnson, adapted and directed the play at Theater in the Round in 1992. He shares, "It was my first directing gig at TRP and really fun to re-visit the show exactly 20 years later. Jean Williamson is again playing the lead (*Lysistrata*), and Kristen Mathisen is the leader of

the female chorus, but everyone else is new. So that makes it very fun to rediscover and keep fresh."

Johnson adds, "It continually amazes me that a story written 2,500 years ago still works. And since it's a pre-Christian script and from such an ancient, far away society, it's surprising how sexually rambunctious it is. They set their boundaries at *waaay* different places that we do. It's actually liberating to inhabit that world."

that with *The Way of Water*.

Director Wendy Knox says the play "is about people who are already struggling to make it, people who are already battling issues related to class, to racism, etc. The BP oil spill disproportionately affected this group of people. And as we watched Hurricane Isaac hit the very same area that Katrina hit seven years ago and think about the fact that between those two natural disasters was an



The Way of Water. Photo by Tony Nelson

THE WAY OF WATER

Through Sept. 30
Playwrights Center, 2301 E. Franklin Av., Mpls.
(612) 5682170
www.franktheatre.org

The 2010 Deepwater Horizon aka BP Oil Spill was a technological cataclysm that some will say is on a par with the hyperpublicized Twin Towers 9-11 horror. But BP's wrongdoing is far less etched into American consciousness. Yet in reality, it was utterly monumental in its devastation—ecological and economic. And for those who like to cut off dialogue on such horrors with ignorant and/or cowardly invocations of "conspiracy theory!", corporate interests that lead back to Dick Cheney's interests are a part of this dreadful chapter in American ecological history. (Look it up!) That chapter needs to be read, humanized, and revised, and Frank Theatre is aiding us in doing



Lysistrata.
Photo copyright Act One, Too, Ltd

environmental disaster resulting from corporate greed, you have to remember what these people have been through. And Caridad Svich, the playwright, asks us to do that as she spins the engrossing stories of four characters attempting to make their living in a small gulf community." ■

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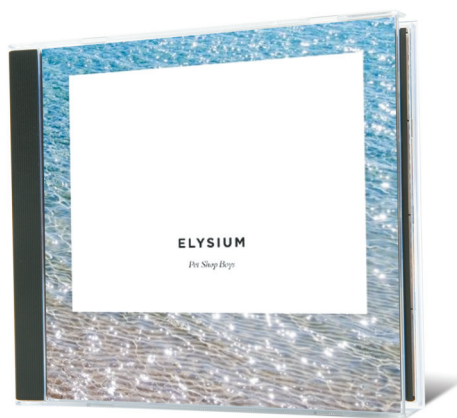
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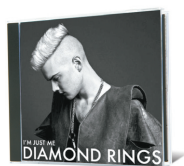
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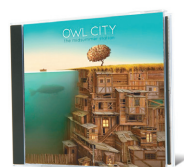
PET SHOP BOYS *Elysium*

The Pet Shop Boys are more than veteran enough to get away with a tune like “Your Early Stuff,” a typically sardonic report from the legendary electronic duo. The beats may not hit as hard and there’s a moodier tone, but *Elysium* is a worthy addition to the band’s discography. Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe start out on a slow burn with “Leaving” and “Invisible” before finding a bouncier vibe on the album’s back half. The album seems particularly cutting in its lyrics, such as “Ego Music,” which punctures the gas bags of pop music. It all wraps up with “Requiem in Denim and Leather,” which ties up all of the strains with a simple message: “This is the last time to say goodbye.”



DIAMOND RINGS *Free Dimensional*

Album number two firmly puts Diamond Rings (Canadian artist John O'Regan) at the front of the line of gender-bending pop artists. Looking like Ziggy Stardust if he'd time-traveled to the modern-day, O'Regan crafts sharp tunes throughout the album, not afraid at all to mix in some guitar to the dance-based electronic backbeat. The album takes up where the debut, *Special Affections*, left off. There are a lot of tunes about sticking up for who you are, from “I’m Just Me” to “I Know What I’m Made Of” to “Stand My Ground.” Other tunes hit on love and lovesick themes (lessons possibly learned from Pet Shop Boys albums) that also mainly hit. It’s a strong sophomore effort that portends plenty of good for the future.



OWL CITY *The Midsummer Station*

I’ve never been the biggest Owl City (Owatonna’s Adam Young) fan, but I approached his latest album with good vibes—and was rewarded with an album that builds off his electronic ambitions into something more mature and infectious. Experience has brought a stronger sense of identity that—ironically enough—is brought out by collaborating with other songwriters. That has opened up his songwriting, producing a solid collection of modern, indie-style rock. “Good Time” merges influences from across the decades—some of the synth flourishes could have come from a Cars album—as Young teams up with Carly Rae Jepsen for a really joyful listen. It’s easy for an electronic-based album to wash over the listener, but Young hooks the listener into his world.



ANTIBALAS *Antibalas*

Afro-pop lives on in this Brooklyn-based collective, who take the time and space to build up a string of hypnotic, funky tunes on their fifth album. It’s no surprise that they record for Daptone, the retro-styled label. Antibalas brings a warm, funky vibe to these six compositions that fit in perfectly with the label’s mission. Saxophonist Martin Perna founded the group, and the heady horn section is a real star here, giving the songs the rough aural edges that snag the listener and draw them into the songs. The call-and-response vocals push the African influences, reminding the listener of landmark acts like Fela’s Africa 70 (they were the house band for the original production of *Fela!* and did arrangements), which only builds the vibe that much more.

SHOWCASE |

photos by George Holdgrafer



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It's Maude!

I confess that when I enter the café, I do at least wish there was a Bea Arthur print somewhere. Instead of that proto-feminist icon, Café Maude celebrates another, in this case a real person. Maude Armatage helped create the Minneapolis parks system, making their new home on the edge of Loring Park a perfect fit.

Café Maude mixes the historically boho Loring Park vibe with their proven formula of killer cocktails, comfort food with a dash of live music, and lands softly in their new space with an ease that feels like they've been there for much longer than the last few weeks.

The tapestry fabric wrapping around the top of the bar and the gold velvet backs on some of the booths harkens back to the the Loring Bar. There's space for live music and plenty of comfortable seating. It's definitely got that same sophisticated, comfortable Maude vibe.

The cocktails and menu also have that same artisan flavor because they're being overseen by the same talented folks who work at the original location. Chef Matthew Kempf has been splitting his time between the two locations, but here he was given free reign over the creation.

The menu is filled with new dishes; just a few classics carried over. The entrees we sampled were sophisticated comfort food with a creative twist. Although the soaring temperatures continue to linger, a dish of lamb shanks and roasted beets is such a fall stunner that I can imagine wrapping myself in cashmere and digging in with bulky-clothed glee (\$24). A stunning shade of scarlet magenta mixed with glazed mahogany colors glisten on the plate. The meat is so wonderfully tender that it discards its own bone after just a little fork prodding. Beneath the leg is a creamy goat cheese risotto studded with earthy beets and little nubs of porky merguez sausage gilding the plated lily.



A lush, boho interior and killer cocktails create a sophisticated and comfortable vibe.
Dining area; Cocktails: Loring Cocktail, Blackberry Revisited, Kentucky Pilgrim; Braised Lamb Shank. Photos by Mike Hnida





A plate of fish and chips sounds simple enough, but what arrives is a little bit of a creative wink, black cod has a crunchy top crust, while the interior is beautifully moist, feathery, and tender (\$24). The chips in question are actually little puffs of fried potato. They look like tater tots, but they're filled with creamy, silky potatoes. Herby green dollops of sauce mix with another mustard-spiked creamy swipe of another.

For lighter fare, the duck "Bánh mì" salad is topped with chilled, sliced, ultra-smoky breast (\$12). Fanned out on top of spinach, it's

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Even more refreshing are the cocktails. Café Maude has always paid careful attention to their cocktail program, one of the first restaurants in town to understand the importance of a cultivated, creative bar team. When the original Maude opened, owner Kevin Sheehy worked with his friend Johnny Michaels, the famed drink shaker from La Belle Vie. The man literally wrote the book on craft cocktails. Now manning the bar is Adam Harness. If you haven't had the pleasure of being served by this highly-skilled young man, might I suggest you scoot in sooner—not later. He's not alone behind that bar; joining him are Chad Larson and Shawn Jones, also members of the Northstar Bartenders Guild and incredibly talented. They bring their own verve to classic cocktails as well as creating entirely new flavors. Take for instance the shrub. Ever heard of one? Me neither, but apparently it's an old-fashioned way of preserving fruit in vinegar and sugar. Mixed into the Kentucky Pilgrim (\$10), the cranberry shrub adds a welcome tart sweetness to the bourbon.

Even teetolers can appreciate the bar menu—there are a whole slew of non-alcoholic drinks. It's a refreshing and delicious trend.

The new Maude is open at 4pm to midnight every day and serves brunch on the weekends beginning at 9 am.

Café Maude
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 www.cafemaudeatloring.com



NEWSY BITS

New restaurants abound! **Murray's** has reopened after a needed facelift. Don't worry; that butterknife steak remains one of the glories of great meat eating. 26 S. 6th St, Minneapolis

Eat Shop Bar/Kitchen has taken over the former Joe Senser's in Plymouth off County Road 24 and Highway 55. It's remarkable in that it's a local, independent restaurant cooking from scratch. I've only had a few bites, but they are currently serving the single best calamari in town. Expect to hear more about this place soon. 16605 County Road 24, Plymouth

Don Saunders has opened the doors at **The Kenwood**, just steps away from Lake of the Isles. They open at 8am every day and stay open until 9pm all days except Sunday, when they'll close at 2. I've only sampled a tiny bite of breakfast, but hold onto your flavor-loving pants—it was so exquisite a bite of food that I immediately proposed to my pancake. We will spend forever in maple syrup sticky bliss, rolling on blankets of black walnut studded butter. 2115 W 21st St, Minneapolis

Not all the new food fun can be found inside four walls. Celebrity Chef **Andrew Zimmern** debuted his new food truck **AZ Canteen**. It's a glorious truck, yellow gold colored and easy to spot. The staff is polished and clearly having a great time. While you won't see the big guy behind the grill, (at least I haven't) you will get the most delicious goat found on four wheels. While the Cabrito butter burger (goat) is hard to pass up, my current favorite is the green papaya salad topped with pork belly. Crispy, crunchy, fatty, unctuous, refreshing with a little chili burn— it's my new favorite salad and comes easy to eat curbside or at your desk. www.azcanteen.com

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**1-USA****Maryland Delegate Acknowledges Football Player "Has First Amendment Rights"**

ThinkProgress reports that anti-gay Delegate Emmett C. Burns Jr. (D) has backed off his attacks against Baltimore Ravens linebacker Brendon Ayanbadejo after creating a media firestorm with his letter condemning the player's support of marriage equality. Ayanbadejo responded on Friday that he was "surprised" by the letter, but that he wasn't backing down and had his team's support, while Minnesota Vikings punter Chris Kluwe stole the media spotlight with his retort to Burns, challenging the delegate, "Why do you hate freedom?" The controversy has sparked a broader dialogue about GLBT inclusion throughout the NFL.

Online Travel Company Expedia Announces Support For Marriage Equality

LGBTQNation reports that online travel company Expedia.com on Tuesday announced its support for marriage equality and the efforts to approve Referendum 74 in Washington state, the November ballot initiative asking voters to approve or reject the state's new marriage equality law. Dara Khosrowshahi, President and CEO of Expedia Inc., said in a statement that supporting the ballot measure "is a natural extension of our ongoing commitment to the LGBT community. We strive to actively promote equality in our workplace and are committed to treating one another with respect and dignity. Part of our overall diversity efforts is providing a supportive environment for our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) employees."

At Democratic Convention, A Record Presence For Gays

PJStar.com reports that the Democratic National Convention is a watershed event for America's gay rights movement, which never before has been embraced so warmly by a major political party. There's a platform endorsing same-sex marriage, a roster of speakers that includes three gay members of Congress, and a record number of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender delegates hailing from all 50 states—486 in all, more than 8 percent of the total. Jerame Davis of National Stonewall Democrats, a gay-rights affiliate of the party said, "We've been an under-represented demographic in politics for a long time. Finally seeing us appropriately represented is just a thrill."

Four Marines Arrested For Assaulting Man At Long Beach Gay Bar

The Press-Telegram reports that Long Beach Police Department detectives are investigating a possible hate crime attack involving four Marine Corps members who attacked a man outside a popular local gay bar, authorities confirmed Tuesday. Silver Fox Manager John Barnes said the attack occurred as the bar was closing, with the primary suspect punching a young gay man who was much smaller. Police were on scene within moments of the call, and the suspects were detained and arrested for assault. LBPD Violent Crimes Division detectives are also investigating the incident as a possible hate crime attack, according to Nancy Pratt, a Long Beach Police Department spokeswoman.

**Minnesota Basketball Star Opposes Marriage Amendment**

The Advocate reports that University of Minnesota basketball star Trevor Mbakwe has joined the team of those opposing the state's anti-marriage equality constitutional amendment. In a post on Minnesotans for Equality's Facebook page, he writes: "This proposed amendment would permanently ADD in discrimination to our states constitution. This feels like taking a step back in time, it's 2012, and this sort of extreme act is not only unfair ... it's anti-Minnesotan! By voting NO to this extreme Marriage Amendment, you're sending a message that you support the rights for all loving couples, gay or straight."

Judge Orders Sex Change For Massachusetts Murder Convict

Boston.com reports that a federal judge on Tuesday ordered state prison officials to provide a taxpayer-funded sex-reassignment surgery to a transgender inmate serving life in prison for murder. U.S. District Judge Mark Wolf ruled in the case of Michelle Kosilek, who was born as a man but has received hormone treatments and lives as a woman in an all-male prison. Robert Kosilek was convicted of murder in the killing of his wife in 1990. Wolf is believed to be the first federal judge to order prison officials to provide the surgery for a transgender inmate.

2-AUSTRALIA**Gay Slur Sparks Gillard Boycott Of Christian Event**

The Sydney Morning Herald reports that the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, has pulled out of speaking at the Australian Christian Lobby's national conference after its leader suggested a homosexual "lifestyle" was more hazardous to health than smoking. The group's managing director, Jim Wallace, made the comment in Tasmania this week during a debate on same-sex marriage, which outraged same-sex marriage campaigners. Ms. Gillard states, "To compare the health effects of smoking cigarettes with the many struggles gay and lesbian Australians endure in contemporary society is heartless and wrong. In light of this, I believe my attendance at the conference would be inappropriate."

3-KENYA**Kenyan Lesbian Rape Victim Hopes Film Will Inspire Other Survivors**

Gay Star News reports that a Kenyan lesbian who was raped because of her sexuality says she wants a documentary about her life to inspire other victims not to give up hope. *I Am Mary* tells the story of Mary Mathui, who, after being the victim of "corrective rape" 11 years ago, conceived a son and was diagnosed with HIV. Mathui states: "I wanted to inspire and to challenge those who have gone through the same experience of rape not to lose hope and stand firm no matter what."



The Big Gay Race: Equality in Motion

LAST YEAR, thousands of people in sneakers hit the Northeast Minneapolis streets to run and walk in The Big Gay Race to raise awareness and money for marriage equality. This year, The Big Gay Race is back—bigger and gayer than ever. The event on September 29 is anticipated to be the “biggest event in the entire amendment cycle,” with over 6,000 people estimated to walk, run, and observe.

Jacob Frey is without a doubt one of the most influential people in raising awareness and money for Minnesotans United for All Families to defeat the anti-marriage amendment this November. As the organizer behind the Big Gay Race in 2011 and again this year in 2012, Frey has become one of the biggest allies for GLBT people and marriage equality. Frey says that many people question his involvement as a straight ally, but he has an immediate reply. “It’s because it just sucks,” Frey says. “If I’m getting screwed over, I would want people to stand up for me as well. The way I look at it is that you don’t need to be part of the population that’s getting screwed to stand up and say it’s wrong.”

Frey organized the race last year in order to offer a fun way for people to get involved in the fight for marriage equality. “It was pretty apparent that there was this constitutional amendment that was most likely going to get on the ballot...I thought to myself,



Photos by Sophia Hantzes

‘Hey, what would be something I can do that would give a lot of people something to look forward to in the face of the weight of some pretty nasty decisions?’ I got a permit for the Big Gay Race, and off I went.”

One reason that marriage equality is so important to Frey stems from his observations of loving couples during his childhood.

His parents were professional modern ballet dancers and had many friends who were gay. Frey notes, “As far as I was concerned growing up, some guys like guys, and some guys like girls... more than anything, it’s a non-issue.” Frey’s family embedded the idea in him that “everybody matters, and that everybody has the right to be with someone they love.”

Those couples Frey saw influenced him to become the man he is today. He humbly states, “I saw the most loving relationships I’ve ever seen in my entire life. The way they taught me how to love and how to live my life in general has had a huge impact on my life. And if I don’t stand up for them, what kind of person am I?”

Frey believes that “this will be the biggest event—the biggest fundraiser and biggest outpouring of support in terms of numbers—in the entire amendment cycle. If you’re going to take a stand and you haven’t done it yet, this is the place to do it.”

Join Jacob, Minnesotans United for All Families, and Lavender Magazine at The Big Gay Race on September

29 to take marriage equality to the streets! Registration until the day of the race is \$30, with same-day registration set at \$35. All the proceeds of the race will be donated to Minnesotans United for All Families and their campaign against the hateful anti-marriage amendment. For more information, visit www.mnunited.org/biggayrace. ■

AGAINST THE AMENDMENT

Paul Melchert, M.D.

Dr. Paul Melchert is a pediatric physician who cares exclusively for hospitalized patients. He was formerly a pediatrician with Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota. An alumnus of the University of Minnesota and St. Olaf College, his professional interests include: LGBT families, children with special healthcare needs, and premature infants. Paul and his husband James are raising twin three-year-old boys who started preschool this month.

LM: How has your work shaped your beliefs about the proposed amendment?

PM: I am a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The AAP is a national organization with over 60,000 pediatricians as members. We are committed to attaining the best physical, mental, social health, and well-being for all children, from infants

to young adults. Academy members are proud to provide the same excellent medical care to all families, regardless of their backgrounds. We believe all families are entitled to respect. It is disappointing to hear claims that people from different families are not worthy of equal respect, equal love, and equal laws. From my perspective, it is clear that the proposed marriage amendment threatens children's access to health insur-

ance and health services. That is a perspective shared by the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. In August, they unanimously voted to join the Minnesotans United for All Families coalition.

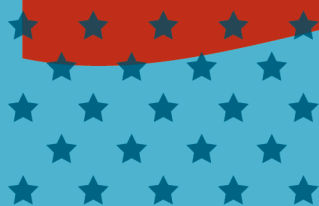
LM: There is a lot of science that proves a parent's sexual orientation is inconsequential with regard to raising healthy and successful children. ➡

Continued on page 57



James and Paul with their preschoolers. Photo by Sophia Hantzes

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Actual Incidence Of Child Molestation By Gay Individuals: Why Should We Care?

Members of disliked minority groups are often stereotyped as representing a danger to the majority's most vulnerable members. For example, Jews in the Middle Ages were accused of murdering Christian babies in ritual sacrifices. Black men in the United States were often lynched after being falsely accused of raping white women. In a similar fashion, gay people have often been portrayed as a threat to children. Back in 1977, when Anita Bryant campaigned successfully to repeal a Dade County, Florida ordinance prohibiting anti-gay discrimination, she named her organization "Save Our Children," and warned that "a particularly deviant-minded [gay] teacher could sexually molest children."

In psychological professional organizations, pedophilia is defined as an (adult) preference for prepubescent children as sexual partners WHILE child molestation is defined as the actual sexual contact of an adult with a prepubescent individual. Also, these same professional organizations recognize that almost all molesters are either "fixated" (exclusive interest in children no matter what the sex of the child) or "regressed" (under stress these molesters regress from adult sexual relationships to child sexual relationships regardless of what the child's sex is). Thus, molesters have no sexual interest in adults. The terms homosexuality and heterosexuality refer to an adult and their ADULT sexual gender preference. Thus by definition AND by actual scientific studies, adult homosexuals and heterosexuals are

rarely if ever child molesters. Furthermore, molesters are best classified as "same-sex" molesters (homosexual molesters) or heterosexual molesters again emphasizing that molesters are interested ONLY in children for sexual activity. Essentially all molesters have no sexual attraction for adults!

Actual scientific studies have consistently shown that the actual adult sexual gender preference of molesters is less than 1% homosexual and greater than 99% for children. Because of such an amazingly low percentage of adult homosexual preference among molesters, virtually no psychological professional research has been done due to essentially no link between adult homosexual preference and molesters child preference!

Yet conservative groups such as the Family Research Council (FRC) continue to quote multiple flawed research studies trying to prove there is a connection between adult homosexual behavior and molesters. These studies' flaws are 1.) failure to take into account the lack of adult sexual preference by molesters, 2.) lack of actual interviews with molesters for their actual sexual preference, 3.) using anecdotal stories as scientific research, or 4.) failure of the FRC to acknowledge their own studies showing there is no relationship between adult homosexual preference and molesters preference for children!

The big question is WHY IN MINNESOTA SHOULD WE CARE about the actual percentage of child molesters being true homosexuals? The reason is, based on what

has happened in the previous 31 states that have voted on gay marriage issues. Starting the month before the election (October), our state will be overwhelmed with ads stating that ALL ADULT HOMOSEXUALS are molesters. Thus, any undecided voter who does not know the actual facts mentioned in this article may potentially be persuaded for religious reasons, emotional reasons, or family or social reasons, to vote for the amendment. Please familiarize yourself with the definitions of child molesters, the sexual preference of molesters (children), and adult homosexuals—who have essentially no preference for sexual activity with children. Please educate fellow voters to the scientific facts so we can counter the emotional, false rhetoric that will be spread starting in October. ■

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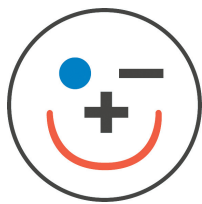
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Meet Mr. Friendly

Interview with Derek Harley, Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2012

Allow me to introduce you to Derek Harley, Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2012. Allow *him* to introduce you to Mr. Friendly, the new face (literally) of HIV stigma awareness. Harley is the team captain for Team Friendly Minnesota.

Tell me about Mr. Friendly.

Mr. Friendly is the new face of reducing HIV stigma. His face is a positive and a negative sign, so someone who wears this symbol is saying, "Positive or negative, I'm here for you. Regardless of your HIV status, we're all in this together."

How did you get hooked up with Mr. Friendly?

I was introduced to Mr. Friendly at the International Mr. Leather contest three or four years ago. I have a lot of very close friends who have tested positive. They needed support, and we've been there for them all throughout their journey of acceptance. I've seen some stigma-related incidents happen with them, and I just think this is a conversation that our city and our community needs to have. Speaking openly and honestly about HIV and reducing stigma is going to make our community better.

How did Mr. Friendly get started?

It was started by Dave Watt, a former Mr. Michigan Leather titleholder. He competed and won his title in September, 2008, and during his title year he started the Mr. Friendly program.

Why is the Mr. Friendly program needed? What does it hope to accomplish?

Reducing HIV stigma will make the world

a better place for those living with HIV. It is going to increase testing, decrease transmission, and just overall make the world a friendlier place.

Give me an example of HIV stigma.

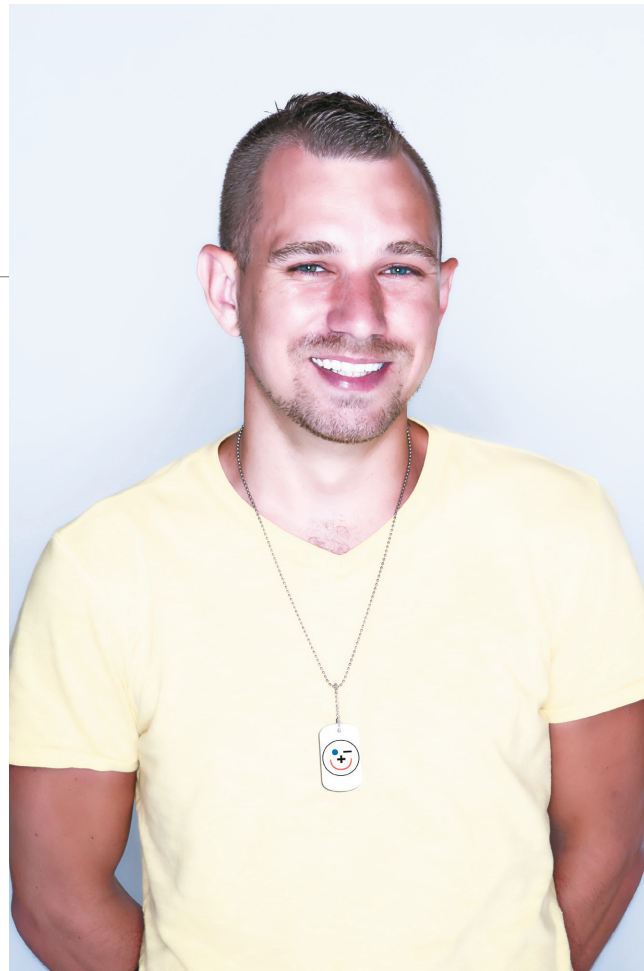
I think a lot of people don't realize that they might be inducing stigma in conversations they have. They might think they're open-minded to individuals who are positive, but when it comes down to it, maybe they're not so much. An example I like to use is the question, "Are you clean?" On its face it doesn't seem offensive, but if you look at the opposite side of that, you're implying that someone who is not negative and has a positive status is somehow dirty. And that doesn't make that person feel very good.

Mr. Friendly is needed because we have to put it out there that the way you interact with someone who is positive can have a deep impact on how they feel about themselves. If we make them feel dirty or unwelcome or that they're outcasts, we are degrading them as a person.

And, really, the status is just a part of who they are. They're living with HIV, but it's not necessarily what defines their lives. Many people I know who have HIV don't go around every day thinking about the fact that they have HIV and don't wear a big sign that says, "Hey, I have HIV." But that's how they're treated when they disclose their status.

For years I've seen phrases in online profiles such as "DDF/UB2" ("drug and disease free, you be too").

In phrases like that there's stigma at-



Derek Harley. Photo courtesy of Richard Yates Photography – Minneapolis, MN

tached all over the place, and not necessarily just referring to HIV. If you start dictating exactly what your terms are, you close the door to a conversation. Mr. Friendly is about having that conversation, having an open and honest conversation about statuses. Why can't I just ask, "Hey, are you positive or are you negative?" and from there have a conversation about that, and define what's safe for a particular person? But if you initially shut down the conversation by stating a demand of "drug and disease free, UB2," it closes the door to having that conversation.

How can people get involved with Mr. Friendly and Team Friendly Minnesota?

We had a launch party on Sept. 15, and we're doing a second one to reach out to the 18+ crowd on Sept. 20. From there we'd like to see the program do something along the lines of monthly outreach at different bars. And we want to get Mr. Friendly pins into the bars, so that even if we're not doing an outreach event people can get an information card that talks about Mr. Friendly, and a pin they can wear to show that they are status-friendly folks. □

Visit the Mr. Friendly website at www.mrfriendly.info. There is also a Facebook page for Team Friendly Minnesota—search for "Mr. Friendly" on Facebook.

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BY E.B. BOATNER

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Today, everything from manufacturing techniques to buying novels is changing—life is as fluid as quicksilver, and flexibility is also the watchword for home seekers. As the mandate to own wanes, rental options become more and more attractive, and the lure of an “urban-getaway” beckons.

Three luxury apartment complexes now under construction in the Downtown Minneapolis area embody this transition from free-standing houses and owned condo units to rental apartments as the space to call Home. Representatives from each—222 Hennepin, Vue, and Mill & Main—spoke recently with Lavender about their plans for the city's fabulous new apartment dwellers.

... 222 HENNEPIN ...

Brenda Studdt, Director of Marketing for The Excelsior Group's 222 Hennepin property, slated to open in the summer of 2013, sees a clear desire for luxury rentals. “Yes, we think so. Especially among the younger generation that is beginning to make a name for themselves in the work force. Having witnessed the effects of the residential real estate market on their family homes, they are less apt to rush into a home purchase. They would rather retain their living flexibility and rent.”

Studdt added that factors involved in the rental market are “a perfect storm of the above mentioned items, coupled with the fact that convenience is a huge priority for people of all ages. Young adults and empty-nesters alike want to rent their home so they can spend their time and money on things that really matter to them.”

Are most clients looking for a permanent or at least long-term dwelling, or are some—business people or visiting professors—planning on shorter-term stays in the Twin Cities? “Some companies,” Studdt has found, “will require shorter leases, but a twelve-month lease is a pretty standard timeframe for most renters. However, as more people choose renting as a ➔

222 Hennepin ○

○ Vue

Mill & Main Apartments





LUXURY APARTMENTS

way of life, we may see longer leases, with annual built in increases.”

The seven-story 222 Hennepin at the corner of Hennepin and Washington Avenues comprises 286 upscale apartments ranging from 500 square feet for a studio to 1,560 square feet for a penthouse unit. There is a resident parking garage. Rents today, said Studt, go from \$1,140 to \$3,800 a month.

“Residents will enjoy stunning views of the Minneapolis skyline, the Mississippi, and the North Loop neighborhood from the rooftop deck, as well as from their rooms.” There is a Whole Foods on the ground floor, while other resident amenities include a swimming pool, bocce ball court, gourmet grill, and outdoor fireplace. Skyline Park Terrace and Courtyards will also provide areas in which to congregate and relax, and there are a variety of resident lounges like The Jag, a community bar/club and wine room. For the athletically inclined, 222 Hennepin features a 24-hour fitness club.

A popular attraction for many city-dwellers is that 222 Hennepin is pet-friendly. They currently offer a dog run area, and they plan to provide pet concierge service in the future. The property is, she added, “100 percent smoke-free.” All construction in 222 Hennepin is aimed towards achieving certification for LEED. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design is an internationally recognized mark of excellence, giving building owners and operators a framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design solutions.

According to Studt, “The majority of our clients are renters by choice. They are seeking the flexible, nimble lifestyle that renting brings. There hasn’t been an instance yet that we have engaged in the renting vs. owning conversation. We don’t have to sway people to rent anymore—they want the lifestyle it brings.”

As to the specifics of the 222 Hennepin luxury apartment interiors, Studt praised, “Well thought out designs,” that include stainless steel fittings, Energy Star appliances, granite countertops, and a floating granite top island in the kitchen, espresso wood cabinetry, a full-size washer and dryer, oversized windows with solar shade treatments, a balcony, walk-in closets, linen closets, tiled showers, and plank flooring. “We’re certainly open to discussions about finishes,” she said, “however, 222 Hennepin will be delivered as designed by the architect.”

Others of The Excelsior Group’s properties, said Studt, “are in outer-ring suburbs and are performing well. Now, however, we are seeing a trend that renters are being drawn to an urban, walkable lifestyle making 222 Hennepin a great location for a new development.”

For more information, visit www.222Hennepin.com and/or call (612) 344-4000.

... MILL & MAIN ...

Kelly Doran, owner and principal of Doran Companies, offered insights on the growing trend towards renting rather than owning. “There

are many factors that go into the buy-versus-rent question, but there are three important reasons why apartment living is a growing trend.”

“First, the Boomer demographic generally will own larger homes in Minneapolis and suburban neighborhoods, and very often a second home in the country or on a lake. That’s a lot of real estate to maintain, so selling the big house and renting a brand-new, maintenance-free apartment can be very inviting. Think about it: no snow blowing, no lawn mowing, no real estate taxes, and no large association fees.”

“Second,” Doran continued, “many singles and young couples who may have had a bad experience owning a home, or were kept out of the housing market as a result of the Great Recession, may still have a large enough income to support a very nice urban apartment with no need to come up with a big down payment, annual real estate taxes, monthly mortgage payments, and, in the case of a condo, large monthly association fees.”

“Finally, for many the decision may not have anything to do with buy-versus-rent. Their choice may simply be influenced by the location and the amenities that a property has to offer. Clearly, the Mill & Main location on the river in an urban park setting, just a short walk across the iconic Stone Arch Bridge to Minneapolis’s business district and vibrant entertainment and restaurant venues, will be a real draw. Kind of the best of both worlds: a quiet, neighborhood feel, with all the advantages of urban living.”

Delving further into factors pertinent ➔



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to the Twin Cities, Doran explained, “In markets like New York and Chicago, renting has been much more the norm than in Twin City urban areas. While renting has traditionally been entry-level housing for singles and young couples in Minneapolis, I think that’s going to change—partly because of demographics.”

“Families are smaller, Boomer’s nests are empty, but maybe even more than that are the changing attitudes toward driving and the high cost of energy. Studies have shown that housing in urban locations, within walking distance to mass transit, work places, grocery stores, restaurants, and parks are in great demand and assume greater real estate value.

“Again, as a developer, I can’t emphasize enough how important location is to the decision-making process when considering whether to do a project. That there is a Lund’s grocery store a few blocks up the street, and parks, trails, and a river outside our front door certainly had a lot to do with our building of Mill & Main.”

Doran foresees both long- and short-term dwellers. “We are projecting a mix of tenants. I can see a couple in their 50s or early 60s living at Mill & Main for many years, while young professionals who work downtown might start out in a studio, but as their family and earning situation changes, eventually moving up to a two or three-bedroom unit.”

“We are close to the University of Minnesota and the downtown business district,” he added, “so it is likely that we could also have a fair

amount of visiting professors and business executives who will rent for shorter periods. The ability to be flexible is yet another advantage of renting. A young professional never knows when his employer may ask him to transfer to another city. Renting can make that a much easier transition.”

Mill & Main, which will be completed in June of 2013, will be a seven-story building with 180 units and a parking garage. There are ten two-story townhouses at street level, and studio, one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments ranging from 518 square feet to 1850 square feet on levels three through seven, with monthly rents ranging from \$1,200 to \$3,400. The apartments are pet-friendly, with the exception of floors three and seven, and will include a Pet Spa.

The building is smoke free.

Doran pointed out how Mill & Main’s features reflect its location. “The stone, metal, and glass exterior was inspired by the nearby Minneapolis Mill District with the goal of building an urban landmark that will stand the test of time. I am particularly proud of this project’s interior and exterior amenities. The Central Terrace on the third level is unrivaled, and our large five-diamond hotel-like lobby is elegantly designed and appointed.”

“In addition, I think it is important that we are a local, family-owned business that develops, builds, and continues to own and manage our projects (unlike many developers who will hire out-of-state management firms to lease and manage their buildings). My staff works very hard

to protect our reputation of setting a very high standard for maintenance of the projects we own and manage.”

Many of the Mill & Main apartments have spectacular views of the Mississippi River, Father Hennepin Park, and the Minneapolis downtown skyline. However, everyone will be able to enjoy the dramatic views and stunning sunsets from the expansive Central Terrace pool, spa, and outdoor lounging and dining area.

Mill & Main’s apartments come with several different distinctive design choices, but all have spacious balconies and stylish contemporary finishes. The central location of the building, Doran notes, is one of its biggest draws. “I believe people want to live in urban locations within walking distance to mass transit, their work places, grocery stores, restaurants, entertainment, and parks. It is this demand that we are responding to.”

Asked what he might tell a prospective client, Doran responded, “There are advantages to both [renting and owning], but in the end I would tell potential clients not to let either option keep them from living in a location or home that meets their needs and makes them happy.”

Doran has applied his apartment strategy in other venues as well. “Three years ago, we started developing premier student housing projects at the University of Minnesota because I believed there was a demand. I now have three student housing projects at the university with another under construction, and they are all fully leased. I think you will see a similar trend ➡

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... VUE ...

Traci Thomas, President of the Continental Property Group (CPG), spoke about clients for their Vue project, now under construction at 415 Oak Grove Avenue in the Loring Park area. “More and more, people are discovering that there is a sense of freedom that can come from renting, and Vue will attract residents who are renters by choice.”

Thomas also sees multiple factors at work in the growing rental trend. “According to housing experts, the Minneapolis-St. Paul apartment market is among the healthiest in the country. Even during the housing downturn, the rental market was the one bright spot. We anticipate a strong market for the units in Vue when it is ready for occupancy in January of 2013. Other upscale, new-build apartment projects in the Twin Cities have actually filled up faster than expected and vacancies are especially low in the Loring Park area.”

Thomas anticipated that apartments serve a variety of needs for renters. “For some residents, Vue will be their primary home; for others it will serve as an urban getaway where they can enjoy all of the amenities available on-property and in this bustling Loring Park neighborhood and across the Twin Cities. They will bring a new

vibrancy to this dynamic urban area, utilizing public transportation, nearby biking trails, local restaurants, and other close-by amenities. Vue is a seven-story building with six stories of apartments, 119 units in all, plus a parking garage. Apartment plans include twenty-six alcove units, forty-seven one-bedroom apartments, ten one-bedroom apartments with a den, thirty-three two-bedroom units and three two-bedroom units with a den. Some units have two levels, and units range from 525 to 1,500 square feet, with monthly rents from \$1,200 to \$3,375 for a penthouse. Like other new luxury rentals, Vue is pet-friendly, “welcoming all types and sizes of domestic pets,” Thomas said, and assured Vue will be smoke-free.

“Residents will enjoy an amenity-filled lifestyle in an intimate, boutique apartment setting,” Thomas continued. “The rooftop terrace, with multiple grilling stations, fireplace, and other comfort features, are designed to be a popular gathering area for residents. Just one example is the clubroom—complete with a commercial kitchen—that will open onto the rooftop terrace to reveal breathtaking views of downtown Minneapolis.

“Other onsite services include a Cyber café with office services, billiard area, private courtyard, native rain garden, and underground parking garage for residents and their guests. The well-appointed wellness center will feature the latest workout equipment, steam shower, and sauna.”

Vue residents of all types, Thomas concurs, are renters by choice, who “enjoy the freedom of not owning their own home, and who will bring a

new vibrancy to this dynamic urban area.”

“Finally, Vue will offer all of the latest comforts and technologies that are desired by an urban professional seeking the latest trends in apartment living. Vue offers residents smart unit layouts in sizes from alcove to 2-bedroom plus den with two cabinet, countertop, and flooring options available, depending on the specific building floor selected. Additionally, units larger than alcove will be equipped with gas ranges.

“Since its inception in 1979,” Thomas concluded, “CPG has evolved into one of Minnesota’s strongest, most consistently creative commercial developers, serving all segments of the industry from neighborhood retail, medical buildings and office towers, to sprawling industrial compounds. While Vue is the first residential development project for CPG, our project team brings many years of success in this sector. Project partners, Greco Properties, BKV Group and Frana Companies bring a wealth of residential experience in this market.

For more information visit www.LoringVue.com.

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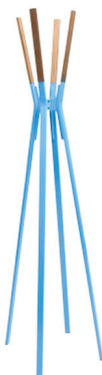
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1



2



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4



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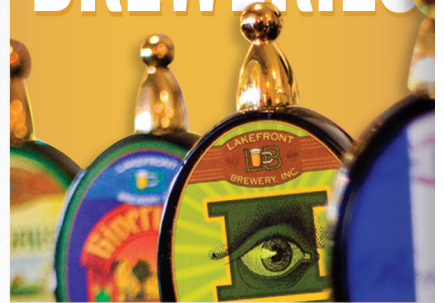
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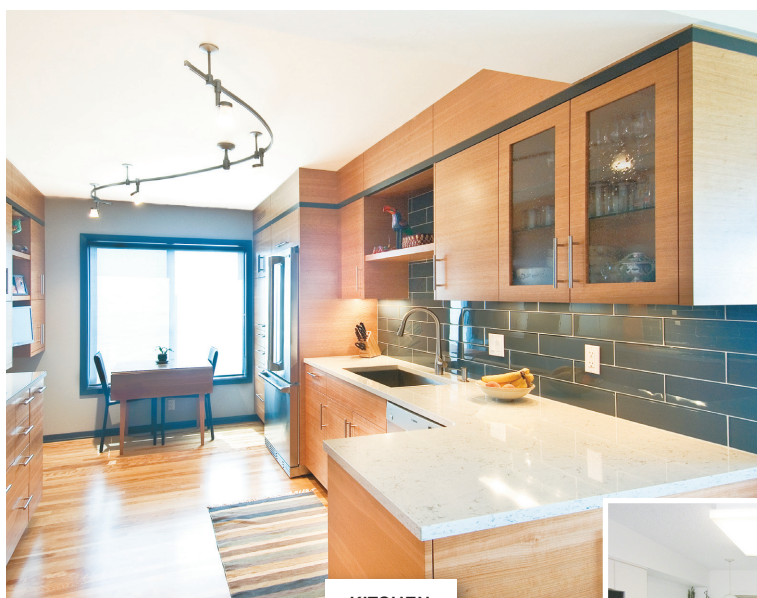


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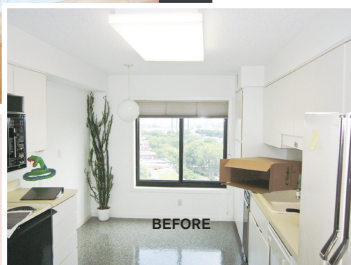


Small Spaces, Big Possibilities: Condo and Apartment Renovations

BY KATHLEEN WATSON



KITCHEN



More and more, people living in urban areas like the Twin Cities look to condominium or apartment buildings for a place to call home. While condos and apartments tend to offer several amenities and great locations, it's sometimes hard to escape the sentiment of being trapped in a cement box that is identical to the other hundred people living in the building. However, owners of condos are now taking the liberty of personalizing their spaces through remodeling projects, adding a sense of unique style and flair. Beth Malmberg, Sales and Design Director at Vujovich Design Build, recently directed a condo remodeling project in Minneapolis

that is sure to inspire people who own smaller spaces to revamp and update their "home sweet homes"—even if home is on the 14th floor.

What once was an incredibly sterile and outdated apartment on the Mississippi River is now a luxurious and green-conscious dwelling for a couple that loves to enjoy an urban environment when they aren't traveling. Located at LaRive Condos in Minneapolis, this condo is an example of how cohesive elements and timeless features can create a home filled with, what Malmberg calls, "natural comfort."

Built in the 80s, the condo desperately needed to be updated, and the homeowners wanted to incorporate environmentally friendly products into the plan. Malmberg notes that building green was "mostly done through selection and not so much changes to the mechanical side of things. We focused on building things that are durable, things that will have longevity and that aren't overly trendy, and we used sustainable and health-friendly products." Some products used in this project include FSC Red Birch floors, tile with recycled glass content, No-VOC paint (paint containing no volatile organic compounds that compromise the air quality during and after painting), and wool carpet.

This project was all about "maximizing space and





MASTER BATH



BEFORE



ENTRY



BEFORE

defining function,” as Malmberg states. Most notably, the foyer underwent significant changes under this goal. Designed in the style of the time, the foyer area had several 45-degree angles and “things that spoke to the era in which it was built,” according to Malmberg. “You came through the door and felt like you were in a bit of a maze. Everything in the foyer was mirrored originally. It was a crazy kind of feeling—you didn’t know if you had landed or what the experience was going to be like.” In order to open the condo into a more welcoming environment, the area was squared off to create a spacious foyer complete with a bench and unique storage.

Other renovations completed in the condo included a much-needed kitchen update, with timeless wood cabinetry and updated floors, countertops, and appliances. The guest bathroom was remodeled keeping the original layout—existing floor plans are sometimes difficult to modify in a condo setting. The master bathroom was re-envisioned as well in order to add more storage space and continue the fluid, natural flow of the home.

Though the homeowners received quite a bit of guidance from the design team, they assisted in planning the look and feel of the condo by providing photos of design elements they liked. Together, the homeowners and Vujovich created a home that is “clean, streamlined,” and full of “organic products” that provides “natural comfort.”

Malmberg suggests that people who are interested in remodeling allow themselves several months to plan. She notes that people may think they know what they want, but planning with a professional team is a valuable use of time and money. When you utilize the help of a design team, Malmberg says, “things are easier to define and price. You know where you’re going to end up in the long run if you invest in that design time.”

Another tip is to create reasonable expectations for project timelines and budget needs. Design and build teams like Vujovich help set and meet practical time lines for remodeling projects. This remodeling project, Malmberg recalls, ended up being a bit more challenging because the new owners of the condo didn’t expect to sell their old home so quickly. “There was a real push for us to move the process along as quickly as possible.” After four months of careful decision-making and constructing, the home was finally ready for the couple to move in.

When re-envisioning a smaller space like a condo, it’s important to incorporate co- ➔

hesive elements, according to Malmberg. This condo uses the same quarter-sliced cherry wood for cabinets in the bathrooms and kitchen. Using one material throughout a smaller space creates unity and a calming simplicity. It's important to simplify details and "put punches only in specific places so it doesn't seem overwhelming."

Also, Malmberg notes the importance of maintaining consistent flooring, which makes a home look unified and larger. "One room runs into the next. In this case, it was all about creating a serene setting—taking a small space and making it feel like a whole home. It helps move your eye through the spaces and gives you the sense that you're continuing through one larger space."

Malmberg believes very strongly that projects are more successful if homeowners work with a design-build team. This will allow homeowners to have very accurate numbers throughout the whole building process. "As you're making choices, you're doing it with numbers in mind...not just as a guess of what it might cost."

If you're not working with a specific design-build team, Malmberg says that it's useful to have your team mapped out before you begin. Know who is doing what, and keep everyone informed



GUEST BATH

TIPS

Spruce up your apartment with fresh ideas from Linder's!

Linder's is now introducing a new line of products and services called Naturally Urban. With an aim to please the fashion-forward and green-conscious desires of a younger generation, Naturally Urban will focus on how to add unique plants and decorations to apartments and lofts. Linder's hopes to increase urban gardening in the Twin Cities so more people can enjoy the benefits of having plants in their environments.

Urban dwellers will love Naturally Urban's focus on "local, organic, or green options to incorporate in a style fitting with more modern trends and themes." These options include plants, furniture, artwork, and other unique items that are not mass-produced.

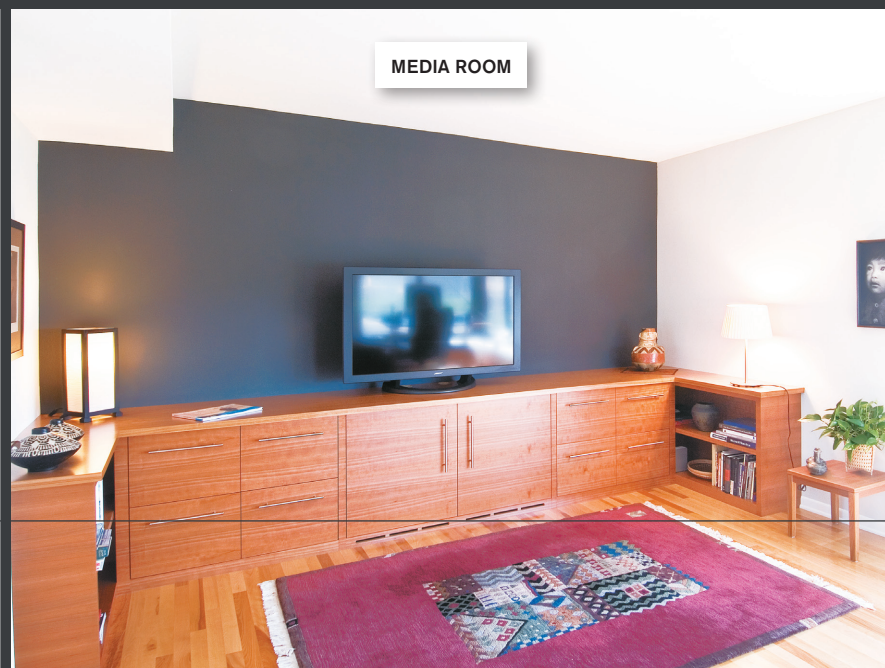
Visit the Linder's Garden Center in St Paul to view a mock apartment complete with horticultural products as well as design and product ideas to fit a unique urban lifestyle! For more information, visit www.linders.com.

of any changes or updates. "Really, it's about the relationship and working with people you trust—people who can come to the table and figure it out."

Finally, Malmberg suggests that homeowners "be realistic the whole way through. It's easy for us to all get very passionate about what we're doing and be enthusiastic, but it's important to always have that reality check going on as well."

Though apartments and condos may seem small, owners of these spaces still have the opportunity to dream big. While it's important to note the limitations of the space at hand, a thoughtful plan and a supportive design-build team allow condo owners to imagine the possibilities and make their units feel like home. □

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The Green Room – Bringing the Inside Out To Your Patio and Balcony Spaces

GARDENS COME in all shapes and sizes, and just like the rooms inside, when thoughtfully executed, reflect a homeowner's personal style. A garden might seem out of reach for someone just moving into a sexy new condominium or apartment. This certainly does not have to be the case. Why not bridge the inside with the out by adding a little green to your balcony or patio areas? With a little effort, attention to detail, and a bit of care, your favorite room might turn out to be the one decked out in green outside the patio door.

Just like decorating rooms inside your home, careful consideration of complimentary containers, furnishings, and artwork is of the utmost importance. Make choices that express your sense of style while working with the surrounding architecture, sightlines, and rooms inside. Choose a theme or color scheme and commit to it. Layout the "furniture" with artwork, container plantings, and other accessories used thoughtfully to frame or block views, create focal areas, or to soften hard lines. Think about how you will use the space, dividing your patio or balcony by how you intend to use it. A good layout might include seating, dining, and cooking areas, each having its own place within your open outdoor floor plan.

Outdoor rooms often need a little privacy to shield us from the realities of our neighbors, regardless of how much we like them. Building a fence or planting a hedgerow isn't always an option to screen the sightlines and less than desirable focal points of those nearby. Strategically-placed container groupings or even living wall systems might be just what the doctor ordered to add a bit of life to the outside while serving very necessary purposes. We often think of containers as focal points, but with the right placement, and proper plant choices, they soon can be just the ticket to physically create privacy barriers or to psychologically create more intimate spaces for us to enjoy while coexisting with the world around us. Soon the unattractive neighbor or public view becomes non-existent, or at the very least minimized by the beauty that surrounds your new outdoor living room.

Make your plant choices wisely. Right plants in the right place make all the difference and can make or break the livability factor or the outdoor room. A room can be perfectly appointed, but the scrappy plant in the corner will always steal the show, leaving an unfortunate lasting memory for your VIP guests. Understand your light levels, and be realistic on how much care you can devote your plantings. If you are unsure, don't be afraid to ask. Experts at the garden center can help you select appropriate plants, containers, and help create winning combinations that will thrive in your space while coinciding with your care schedule.

Green thumbs up for gardeners without gardens. With a little effort, apartment dwellers don't have to feel left out of the garden world. They simply have to open up to the possibilities right on the balcony, terrace, or patio. ■

Scott Endres is co-owner of Tangletown Gardens and Tangletown's Wise Acre Eatery on 54th and Nicollet in South Minneapolis.

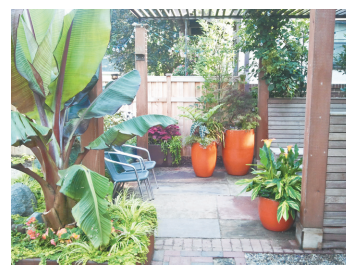


Photo courtesy of Scott Endres.



FIRST THURSDAY AT ROAT OSHA SEPTEMBER 6





Photos by Randy Stern



FORD TAURUS

Name one of the most popular automobiles of the past three decades.

If you said the BMW 3-Series, you are right—on a global scale. In the 1990s, the 3-Series began to outsell mainstream models around the world thanks to a boost in the economy across both industrial and developing countries. They were an outgrowth of a world run by Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, and Boris Yeltsin when the common person chucked the low-priced car for something ambitious and upwardly mobile.

However, I ask the question only for North America. That should be an easy one to answer since you probably see at least a dozen of them on the road every day. They range from clapped out models from the 1980s to current members of the rental car fleet. Still, they changed the way we viewed the family sedan from the moment they arrived on the day after Christmas in 1985.

In this case, it is the Ford Taurus.

It was Ford's after-Christmas sale that prompted a visual adjustment for the American car buyer. The aerodynamic shape of the old Bull welcomed six passengers for commuters and road trippers alike. The size was right with its front-drive configuration, powerful V6 engines, spacious and intuitive

interiors and huge cargo capacity. Millions of units later, many Tauruses are still on the road today.

When production stopped in 2006 of the old mid-sized Taurus, Ford sought to replace it two-fold: The smaller Fusion and the larger Five Hundred. The Fusion has since become one of Ford's best selling passenger cars. The Five Hundred was not.

To save the large Volvo-based front-drive sedan, Ford had to do something. A planned revision and engine upgrade was not enough in the eyes of the company. It needed a more important boost—a name change.

Since 2008, the Taurus name has graced a car larger than originally envisioned three decades before. It continues to do so. A redesign to align the Taurus with current Ford styling tenets was executed for 2010. Now, a revision to that design seeks to help boost Ford in its new mission: to become the big sedan for families again.

Somehow, another task was given to the Taurus. As another strong selling vehicle was given its final assembly run, a gap in a market segment opened up for the Big Bull—public safety. To coincide with the ending of the old rear-drive Crown Victoria's run, Ford assigned the Taurus to patrol duty. In Minnesota, the

Department of Public Safety designated the Taurus to supplant their fleet of Crown Victorias out on the highways of our state. The first State Patrol Taurus was unveiled at the Minnesota State Fair with its first units to be soon reporting for duty late this fall.

As supposedly planned all along, the new-fangled, Volvo-based, front-drive big sedan eventually replaced the old rear-drive Panther platform. The Taurus now sits at the top of Ford's passenger car food chain. All we want to know is whether it truly belongs there.

Starting on the outside, the changes to the 2013 model may seem subtle. The frontal tucks fit within the company's kinetic design language. At first glance, you might be apt to compare it to an Audi. If you happen to be one those people, it would be considered a compliment. The goal for this upgrade is to simply have an upmarket air for the Taurus.

Still, the Taurus retains one factor it has had since December 26, 1985—to stand out in a crowd. The 1960s/1970s inspired design of the roofline is a giveaway for today's Big Bull. The rear end—also with a lineage going back to the early 1970s—remains unique. Modern touches round out the package from the Limited's 19-inch alloy wheels and aero-influenced sculpting elsewhere.

If I were to push the boundaries of the imagination and historic context, what Ford has achieved was not just a proper replacement for the old Taurus and the Crown Victoria. You might as well consider this the perfect modern interpretation of your parent's old LTD.

The Limited tester provided further proof of this summation. The level of luxury inside the cabin rivals that of more expensive vehicles in its size class. Black leather adorns supportive seats with more adjustments than imagined. To get comfortable, you simply play with the power seat settings to get it right. Both front seats are both heated and cooled with variable settings. Rear seat passengers are also treated with almost the same level of luxury as those up front. Room is more than adequate for four adults on long journeys. One thing to note is that the front seats are skewed against the center console, but not obtrusive to feel completely pinned against it.

The 2013's upgrades could be seen right on front of the driver's seat. MyFord Touch has been integrated into the Taurus featuring a huge center TFT touch screen. You can control the SYNC infotainment system along with the navigation, Bluetooth-connected phone, audio and climate control systems. Soft touch buttons also appear below the big screen on the center stack.

The instrumentation binnacle gets Ford's new TFT treatment in the Taurus. Flanking the center speedometer are two multifunction small screens. The left one gives you all of the vehicle's functions from fuel economy and trip computer readouts to showing the tachometer and fuel gauge. The right screen is a redundant screen for MyFord Touch with screens showing you what is playing on the audio system to the person you are talking to. In terms of what MyFord Touch and SYNC could do – this is just scratching the surface. There are enough switches on the steering

wheel to control both of the smaller screens.

Considering the combination of retro and modern design, if you know your Fords well enough, you might recognize the shape of the instrument fascia as reminiscent of a 1961-64 Ford Thunderbird—dual cowls with a sloping center stack. The modern touch comes from the higher level of quality to the more tangible parts of the cabin—switches, fascia and door surfaces. The steering wheel feels right for a lot of different drivers with its perfect size, thin, but grippy rim and smart controls. For some drivers, using the center touch screen would be a bit of a stretch to use while driving. The solution to this is to use the capabilities of SYNC voice recognition and using the redundant switches on the steering wheel to work MyFord Touch's functions.

Sound comes from a Sony-powered audio system fed by SYNC and MyFord Touch. Twelve speakers of sound provide the mood from a series of sources, including SiriusXM, Bluetooth-fed audio files, HD Radio, and other sources SYNC connects with. The bottom line of SYNC and MyFord Touch: it works very, very well. Infotainment, backed by a brilliant sound and ease of operation, makes for great driving pleasure. Ford has simply nailed it here.

Under the hood is Ford's familiar 3.5litre V6 – a versatile powerplant that powers a chunk of its most popular products. With 288 horsepower and 254 pound-feet of torque on tap, this engine had more than ample power to haul over two tons of automobile. As an added sustainable bonus, you can either pour in regular unleaded fuel or E-85 ethanol to feed this V6.

Connected to the FlexFuel V6 is a smooth shifting six-speed automatic transmission. Power is sent down to all four wheels using Ford's latest all-wheel drive system. The combination of the V6 and all-wheel drive would be the most likely driveline for a Taurus in our neck of the woods. You could choose the 240-horsepower EcoBoost 2.0litre four-cylinder turbocharged engine for a new twist on the Taurus and a few more miles per gallon of efficiency. However, the petrol-only EcoBoost 2.0litre turbo is only available in front-wheel drive.

The key to a good large sedan is a set of driving dynamics designed to soothe the soul. The Taurus made some serious improvements in this department. The ride is solid, smooth and absorbent. Road imperfections and other bumps were felt, but

the Taurus's suspension does a great job of keeping them from shocking through the cabin. Once inside the cabin, you are insulated from the world outside with many different forms of sound deadening. I will say that the Taurus was one of the quietest vehicles I have driven so far this year.

Through the curves, the Taurus leaned a tad with plenty of body and suspension control. It would not be the choice to tackle sharp, winding roads, but the Taurus was competent through some nice curvy stretches in town and out in the country. The nineteen-inch Michelin tires provided great grip and a quiet ride to boot. Steering was also competent, exhibiting decent reflexes, nominal numbness, and a light feel at center. Brakes were sharp and to the point in both regular and panic stops. In all, the Taurus was one solid big sedan.

One of the challenges in a big sedan is fuel economy, especially when mixing regular petrol with E85 Ethanol. Overall, the Taurus V6 FlexFuel with all-wheel drive averaged 22.0MPG. Honestly, that is considered par for the course for 4,000-pound-plus sedans.

Because the Taurus now sits on the top of Ford's lineup, its pricing has followed this trend. The 2013 lineup starts off with SE sedan at around \$27,000. This Limited all-wheel-drive tester is stickered at \$39,940. You get a lot for your money at that price point, but it is well worth it. Yet, you could save \$5,400 by going with the lower SEL model concentrating on the MyFord Touch, the SYNC, and the leather seating while losing a few luxuries found on the top package in the Limited.

In today's big sedan market, there is now a choice between some very distinctive models. While some have a bit of pedigree through its brand name, one should not ignore the Ford Taurus when shopping in this segment. The advantage of its on-board technology, proven driveline and solid road manners would put the Taurus in favor over both domestic and foreign brands.

The groundbreaking American sedan of 27 years ago has matured into its new role nicely. It may have grown in considerable dimensions, stature, levels of luxury, and technology—the essence of this big sedan still remains a Taurus.

Randy Stern is an automotive writer from Robbinsdale, Minnesota. He can be followed at Victory & Reseda – <http://www.randystern.net>.



HRC GALA SEPTEMBER 8



What would you say to a person who still thinks only a heterosexual couple can raise healthy children?

PM: Children watch how we interact with each other. They learn respect and tolerance from watching us respect and be tolerant of others. They learn how to disrespect and bully others from watching us disrespect and bully others. There is substantial evidence, supported by the leading medical organizations in the country, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Psychological Association, and the American Medical Association, which demonstrates that children who are raised in same-sex households turn out just as well—in all areas—as those raised by heterosexual parents. In fact, children raised by same-sex parents tend to be more nurturing toward younger children and tolerate higher levels of diversity.

LM: What actions have you taken to defeat the proposed amendment?

PM: Last year, I testified before the State Senate and House Judiciary Hearing Committees against the amendment. I have also volunteered by participating in phone banks in the Minneapolis office. The phone banks have been calling voters to have conversations with them about voting NO. I talk to my neighbors, relatives and friends all the time to make sure they know the importance of voting NO and encourage them to talk to their neighbors, relatives, and friends. I asked my parents to put a yard sign out in Chaska. They were a bit reluctant at first, but I got a text message from them asking for another because their next-door neighbor wanted one.

LM: Based on your experience, how should Minnesota promote stronger and healthier families?

PM: The proposed marriage amendment strengthens no families. We should focus on policies that actually strengthen all families. An example would be improved access to and affordability of excellent healthcare for all children. Another would be eliminating the existing achievement gap in our education system and increasing access to pre-K programs. The AAP has identified that there is a strong link between the health and well being of children and the support and encouragement of all parents and strong family relationships. ■



The Book

I was barely eight years old—a human tabula rasa—when I first saw what made girls different from boys.

Thus reads the first sentence of my book, *Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change*.

It's been a long time coming. I'm not entirely done, either—it will be February, 2013, before the memoir is on Amazon. Much of the process has been equivalent to herding cats.

For one, I'm not a trained writer. In fact, it's way worse than that. As many of my readers know, I was a lawyer, schooled in legal writing, the kind of prose that begins with, "May it please the Court."

Horrible stuff, actually. Far too linear and plastic.

I walked into the Loft Literary Center in January, 2009 and announced, "I want to write my story." I eyed twenty genetic women and one wispy man. The man didn't last, but every woman stuck it out through a four month memoir course.

I wrote my first words—a short piece about my father's death. It was wordy and unfocused, yet there was something about it that my classmates liked. "It's a powerful story even if the writing leaves something to be desired," one woman said with a smile.

I went back to my computer. With a revision in hand, I said, "I know this probably isn't good enough."

The class instructor answered, "You have to own it, Ellen."

It was perfect advice. From then on, I owned whatever I wrote. My goal: write as a human for other humans.

I wanted to work with an actual print publication. I approached an Iowa LGBT monthly and offered to write about experiencing life from a transgender person's perspective. I submitted a first proposed column. It was crap. Arthur, the editor, pushed me to do better.

I returned with words etched from my heart. "Now that's better," Arthur responded.

In February, 2010, the Iowa monthly published my very first column, "Listen to Yourself: You May Hear Something Important."

I took a sabbatical from my law career. I wrote in between surgeries that changed my body to match my female spirit.

I wrote so much that I burned out a Dell

laptop.

I contacted *Lavender Magazine* and asked if it wanted a columnist with a different take on life. Thirteen months ago, *Skirting the Issues* debuted.

I pushed on with my book. I hired an editor. "It's a great story," she reported, "but, you've got a long way to go in your writing." She had published an acclaimed memoir, and I listened.

Luckily, I found a writing group with writers who were better than me. That was key, of course—you never learn from a writer who isn't as good as you. It rubbed off. Eventually, I wrote at least B-grade.

For me, the lawyer, that was pretty damn good.

I overhauled the manuscript. Then I revised it a million times.

A friend asked, "Aren't you done with that thing yet?"

I started to give talks about my life story. Invariably, people came up to me. "When will your book be out?" many asked.

"I'm working on it," was my constant reply.

Even without ever seeing a draft of my memoir, a college professor emailed that she wanted to use the book as a classroom text.

I thought, "Those poor kids."

There are a few—particularly certain family members and friends—who wonder why I'd want to splash my life across 300 pages. Some have lives intertwined with mine. We're talking fear and embarrassment here.

Throw in that there are already a number of books that tell the "transgender story," and one may wonder why I'd go to the trouble. Is it all ego?

I'd like to think not.

Another writer who has seen much of my book says this: I see your story as universal. It tells how it's possible for each of us to make one small decision after another. Eventually, we're led to the place where we declare a major change based on our choice to embrace an integrity that makes it impossible to do anything but live our own truth.

"Live our own truth?" If you ask me, that's a pretty good review for any memoir.

Maybe more than one person will see the book that way.

I can only hope. ■

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Ahoy, Gays!

OVER THE years, there have been so many brave GLBT trailblazers—people who have risked their lives and careers to protect our rights and make us more accepted. Well, peeps, you can now count your own Jennifer Parello among this noble group! Last week, I became the first gay member of my local yacht club.

Over the years, in order to make my life seem much more exciting and amusing than it actually is, I have used this column to wildly exaggerate situations. But there is no need for me to be creative about this episode. I only need to transcribe my notes on what actually took place.

My mom was recently diagnosed with advanced cancer. Initially, I tried to motivate her by suggesting that she must live for her grandchildren. That proved to be a less than compelling argument. So, I told her that if she agreed to chemo, I'd join my yacht club and take her for lunch there as soon as she could stomach food. Her eyes lit up and she said, "Ooooooh, I'll need to get something new to wear." (My mother is a clotheshorse, so an opportunity to go shopping and lunching trumps any pesky discomfort from chemo.)

The club is basically a broken down bar and grill that has a great view of the harbor. I assumed that membership would include little more than filling out an application and paying a small fee. So, I was surprised when the "Rear Admiral" (a courtesy title for the club's membership director) demanded that I meet him for an interview before deciding whether to accept my membership.

The first thing I noticed about the Rear Admiral was that he was drunk out of his gourd. Thus, the interview consisted of him drooling on himself and rambling

about how he is solely responsible for the success of the club and how everyone else sucks. Just when he began nodding off and was about to pass out in a pool of his own spittle, he suddenly roused himself.

"I've always been a risk taker," he slurred. "I've always wanted to get some gays in this club. When I saw your application, I took it to the board and demanded that they let you in. Their only concern is that you might just be pretending to be gay."

"That's what my parents have been hoping for years," I said.

He pulled a document from a folder with a flourish and laid it in front of me to sign. The title was "Declaration of Homosexuality." It was authored by someone who was either very drunk or had a terrible head injury.

The document was the club's ham-handed attempt to confirm that my girlfriend and I are indeed sleeping with each other and, therefore, eligible for a joint membership, and not simply a couple of straight girls trying to cheat the club out of a membership fee.

After signing the document and declaring my homosexuality, the Rear Admiral felt the need to prove just how open-minded he is. He jumped up from the table and grabbed the ass of a guy sitting at the bar. He planted a kiss on his cheek and called him "Sweetie." "We do gay stuff like that here all the time," he proudly exclaimed.

I'm certain that gay history books will one day herald my bravery at joining the gayest non-gay yacht club in all the land. But, for now, I'll settle for the look on my mom's face when in the midst of her first lunch at the club, a couple of drunk straight guys tongue kiss at the bar just to make us feel welcome. □



Kathleen Watson

Here's a snippet of an exclusive interview Lavender scored with Ani DiFranco!



Photo by Sherrin Lainez

KNOWN FOR her refusal to sign every record deal she was offered, Ani DiFranco uses her music and her independent record label, Righteous Babe Records, to share her political and social views. Ani speaks out against corporate control, injustice, patriarchy, and the upcoming Minnesota anti-marriage amendment—motivating and inspiring her listeners to think creatively and constructively about the changes they can make in the world.

Though Ani is happily married to her husband, she is openly bisexual and has long been an advocate for bisexual awareness and acceptance. Ani takes her opportunity to share her experiences seriously, saying "To not talk about it, while it's easier, isn't nearly as effective in social change. So I started using myself and my own experience. The activist side in me had the will to put that shit out there, throw some stuff against the wall of society and see what happened...I feel that to be important work so I'm willing to do it."

Ani could "talk til the sun goes down about what I want to change in America," but she is hopeful about the state of marriage in the United States. She believes, "It's been a long time coming, and the victories have been amazing and thrilling. I imagine that every last state is going to follow suit and that we will have marriage equality in our lifetime...Of course I feel like everyone who wants to get married should be able to get married and have equal rights." □

For more exclusive content, and to hear Ani's views on feminism, patriarchy, motherhood, and more, visit www.lavendermagazine.com.

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**Dear Ms. Behavior:**

I met my friend Jim when he was a call boy. Our fourth time together, during our first all-nighter, I offered him a chance to change his life. I would support him, and ask for no sexual favors.

After nine months of seeing each other, I rented an apartment for him. Several months later I offered him an older car to use. I transferred the title and insured the car in his name, but kept the actual paperwork in my possession. After two short weeks we had a nasty fight and we have not gotten back together since, except for two quick dinner dates without spending the night together. I got fed up and asked for the car back; Jim refused, and I got a lawyer to write a letter. He still refused.

I do still love him, but I can see that he has used me. Am I wrong to ask for the car back and go through with a lawsuit? Jim is seeing someone else now. He is paying for his own apartment now and has a job.

-STEVE

Dear Steve:

Ms. Behavior cannot offer legal advice, but when she imagines herself in judicial robes (as she often does) the title issue strikes her as fishy. If you did not intend for Jim to keep the car, you should have kept the title in your own name.

You may feel used, but the deal you made to “change Jim’s life,” was not one-sided. Your agreement helped Jim, but keeping Jim also made you feel good (i.e., powerful, sexy,

or desired). So try not to feel victimized by a situation that you arranged. You’ll be more at peace if you can see that you and Jim both benefited from the relationship.

Now Jim has a job and is paying for his own apartment, so it sounds like your assistance did help him. When you offered him the opportunity to change his life, wasn’t your intention at least partly to be generous? You say you love him. If that’s true, your feelings for him probably did not end the moment you stopped sleeping together. Maybe it would actually make you both feel happy if you allow him to keep the car.

Dear Ms. Behavior:

My girlfriend of five years called me recently to dump me because one of her gay male friends shared with her the fact that I had spent the night at his place. Yes, it was that kind of sleep over. She did not know I was bisexual and I saw no reason to tell her. When she informed me that she did not want to see me again and the reason, I said, “Fine.” I was tired of her B.S. anyway.

Now I am fully immersed in the gay lifestyle and have no intention of doing any more switch hitting. When my ex realized I was not going to ask for her forgiveness and try to make amends, she really got pissed. Now she really wants me back. What should I do?

-UNDECIDED

Dear Undecided:

Why were you so hostile toward your

girlfriend?

“Who me?” Ms. Behavior hears you saying.

Yes, you. You didn’t just have sex with some other loosey goosey dyke, you had sex with a gay man. But it wasn’t just some random poofster you boffed, it was your girlfriend’s friend. You kept your sleepover with him a secret from your girlfriend, which presumably created some drama because of her friendship with him. You saw “no reason” to tell your girlfriend that you’re bisexual and you also apparently forgot to inform her that you’re a cheater. (It doesn’t sound like you were having an open relationship.)

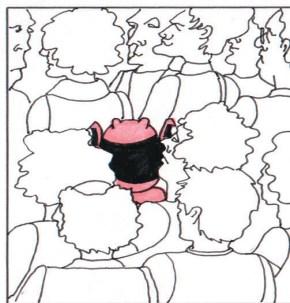
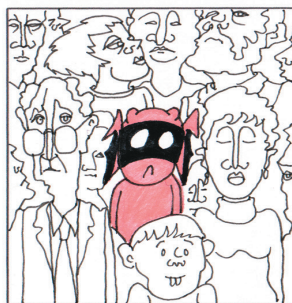
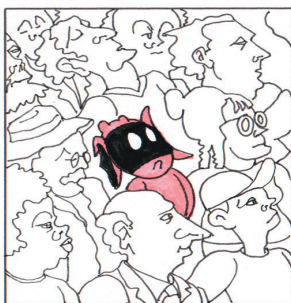
You stirred up a lot of drama and now you don’t seem to feel responsible for any of it. You talk about how your ex feels (pissed) and what your ex wants (allegedly you, although frankly, it’s hard to imagine why), without mentioning how you feel or what you want. When she dumped you, your only response was “Fine.” Now that she wants you back, you don’t know what you want.

If your ex were to write to Ms. Behavior, Ms. Behavior would suggest therapy, since your ex seems to suffer from a frightening lack of ability to protect herself.

You should consider therapy, too. A skilled therapist might help you to discover what lurks beneath all that alarming detachment. Perhaps you were wounded by Mommy or Daddy. Clean it up and you may be lucky enough to find something pleasant underneath all that frothy drama. □

TROLÍN, UN DIABLITO ROSA

POR RODRO



How difficult it is to be oneself!
Comme il est difficile d'être soi-même!

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The Narcissist

I was narcissistic for writing so often about myself.

WHEN I was a boy, I sought everyone's affection, and when I failed to find it, I whined. I stomped my feet and locked myself in my bedroom. I would have none of the subsequent coddling that came from my family (and later my friends), and I would listen to no one who said, "Not everyone's going to like you." In my mind, for whatever twisted reason, if one person didn't like me then no one did, and, even more immaturely, no one ever would. Remnants of this way of thinking stay with me today.

I've grown up a lot since then, but I'm still sometimes that boy under his sheets, whining about the world and slipping into quiet "me, me, me" tantrums. This is especially true when it comes to love, when every moment—every word, every action—is up for analysis: a selfish and constant reaffirmation of "yes, he really does love me."

After reading this thought, some of you will say, "I see myself in that light, too. I too sometimes feel like a child when I don't get my way or not everyone likes me"—the thought resonates with you. Others will opine that the preceding admission is itself an admission of narcissism. Some of you will think that this public confession is proof of that very point: that I'm self-aggrandizing via false modesty.

I encourage and welcome both thoughts. As a writer, I am inherently telling the world (or at least a tiny fraction of it) that I have something worth saying, something that

others will want to hear, something that is in some way differential to what others will say. This is egotistical of me, but this is true of all writers—from commentators to poets, we all think our words are worth something to the world, if only on just the paper they're written. Why otherwise put so much effort into it? It then follows that being a writer, especially in a public forum, means welcoming criticism worth reading... and engaging. A reader gave me pause recently when she said she thought I was narcissistic for writing so often about myself. And it got me thinking... what constitutes a "narcissist?" And am I one?

As I see it, the signs of a narcissist are, in no order: mastery of vanity, relentless insecurity, general obsession with oneself, and the ever-present need to exalt unto the world one's own perils and triumphs, no matter how modest their portrayal—all *largely* without regard for other people. The true narcissist is thus, at his worst, most nearly a sociopath.

My description is as scientific as it is precise (and it is neither): an admission any critic would welcome, as itself contains a validation that I, audacious enough to define the word, am narcissistic.

"Narcissist" is a term we use freely, and when we are being honest, we readily ascribe it to ourselves, *partially*.

Are you a narcissist? Quite likely your answer is no. Even if you are one—under anyone else's definition—you'll find a way out of

fitting your own criteria. But neither would you deny that you have some of the nasty vices we outline a narcissist having—our appreciation for hearing praise for ourselves, for example, though not an attribute exclusive to the narcissist, is no doubt a prerequisite.

I ask myself: am I narcissist? If I must meet ALL the requirements of my proposed definition, I say no, I am not, but if a simple majority suffices, I say yes: (1) Check, I am vain: I have not "mastered" vanity, but I give it far more than its fair share of my time. (2) Check, I am self-obsessed: I am obsessed with myself in the sense that I want to be better at everything I do, and I focus on this objective—I want to be a better writer, a better friend, a better dresser, a better hairstylist, a better worker-outer. (3) Check, I do concern others with my personal tragedies and triumphs, but unlike the narcissist, I strive not for sympathy or a pat on the back, but for solidarity, and not just for myself. We all crave to know that we aren't alone in our thoughts or experiences, no matter how selfish, immature, pitiful, or tragic those may be. I aim to show others that they aren't alone.

But most importantly, (4) Unchecked. My greatest obsession is other people. My most damning characteristic, since childhood, is the need to please others, to make sure everyone around me is happy, because, and this is corny as fuck, I can't stand to know that someone else feels alone. I know what it's like. And I know you do, too. ■



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